

of Epicurus and Lucretius, of Helvetius and Holbach, rather than that of Marx and Marxists. For Marx has succinctly expressed himself on this question. He maintained that "The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the supreme being for mankind and therefore with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a degraded, servile, neglected contemptible being. . . ."

It is not that Lamont ignores this point of view. He recognizes that just as a better society will weaken the belief in immortality so will a prior weakening in this belief help to bring about a better society. But his argument is directed *abstractly* to the refutation of the belief in immortality rather than

concretely to the social conditions that foster it and the actual struggle for a better society which will cause its overthrow. The scientific portions that follow from his conception of his problem are terrifically tedious, simply because men do not believe or disbelieve in immortality merely because of scientific knowledge.

Still, with these general shortcomings, the book stands as a definite work of its kind. Beautifully written, its marshalling of the materials, its copious illuminating quotations and its fervent spirit make it an excellent treatise for those it sets out to convince—the agnostics who try to avoid the issue of a future life.

STUART GREEN.

Literature for Use

THE FARMERS' WAY OUT: *Life Under a Workers' and Farmers' Government*, by John Barnett. Workers' Library Publishers. 5 cents.

THE MINERS' ROAD TO FREEDOM: *In a Soviet America*, by Anna Rochester and Pat Toohey. Workers' Library Publishers. 5 cents.

SEAMEN AND LONGSHOREMEN UNDER THE RED FLAG: *In a Soviet America*, by Hays Jones. Workers' Library Publishers. 5 cents.

THE NEGROES IN A SOVIET AMERICA, by James W. Ford and James S. Allen. Workers' Library Publishers. 5 cents.

WAR IN AFRICA: *Italian Fascism Prepares to Enslave Ethiopia*, by James W. Ford and Harry Gannes. Workers' Library Publishers. 5 cents.

RELIGION AND COMMUNISM, by Earl Browder. Workers' Library Publishers. 3 cents.

THE SUPREME COURT'S CHALLENGE TO LABOR: *The N.I.R.A. Decision a Signal for Intensified Attacks on the Workers*, by William F. Dunne. Workers' Library Publishers. 3 cents.

THE SOVIETS AND THE INDIVIDUAL, by Joseph Stalin. International Publishers. 2 cents.

THROUGH the medium of the pamphlet, many workers make their first contact with revolutionary thought. An individual desires information or clarification on a certain subject. The pamphlet is cheap and convenient. He takes it home, glances through it, puts it down, picks it up again. If the impact is sufficiently forceful, the pamphlet becomes the wedge opening the worker's mind to further literature and discussion.

For this reason, the importance of pamphleteering, so valuable a weapon in the hands of the working-class movement, cannot be overstressed. The pamphlet must be readable in type and text; its cover must attract; facts must be pertinent and accurate to gain and to hold the reader's confidence. When the pamphlet serves its purpose it invariably be-

comes a social possession rather than a personal one. Its reader becomes a participant in its message. The following is a typical example: a working woman procured a little two-cent brochure on the menace of fascism. It was not particularly well-printed, the type was too small, the paper was coarse newsprint, the cover was commonplace. But she liked the contents. After finishing it, she placed it in an empty milk bottle in the hall. The next morning it was gone. A few days later, the milkman rang the doorbell. He wanted to know where he could get additional copies and where he could obtain pamphlets on other subjects.

As a result of his recent reading he had subscribed to *The Daily Worker*. He had handed the pamphlet to his friends on other milk routes; in fact, it was falling apart even though it had been patched several times. Most of the men wanted more literature on similar topics. The pamphlet had clearly served its purpose, out of all proportion to its price.

The titles above represent, in almost every case, a thoroughly successful approach to pamphleteering. They are well printed, well put together, attractive—and cheap. The first four are designed in each instance for a definite audience—farmers, miners, workers on the waterfront, the Negro. Each one analyzes the present status of the category of workers under consideration, points out the evils and difficulties which these workers, individually and collectively, are up against in our present society. They all avoid a ranting, petulant tone; they explain with care and lucidity how capitalism inevitably brings conditions unfavorable to the working class as a whole and the specific forms these conditions take in the field under discussion. The pamphlets proceed to contrast this with what these same workers could expect were they living in a government run by and for workers and farmers. Twenty years ago, such predictions might have been labeled mere wishful thinking. But today, the Soviet Union stands as the proof. We often hear

capitalist apologists in this country remark, "We admit things aren't ideal here; but after all though workers have gained something in the Soviet Union, still no American would be happy under such conditions." But facts speak for themselves. Security for the individual and his family, equal opportunity, cultural and physical benefits and steadily improving standard of living are universally good; whereas, inexorably, the once celebrated "American standard of living" is slipping to below the subsistence level and increasing unemployment and insecurity are becoming the characteristics of American economic life—as they are of life everywhere under capitalism. Each pamphlet carries the argument beyond mere comparison of conditions under the two economies: each pamphlet points the way out—not on a false basis of a promised alleviation overnight, but on the solid and sure basis of organization and struggle.

The four pamphlets are only the first of a number treating the problems of workers, professionals and white-collar elements. The series will deal with textile, steel, auto, railway workers; with the youth and white-collar groups; with the small businessmen and other categories. Each, like the four considered above, will be written either by workers in the occupation discussed or from first-hand knowledge of and experience in the field to be treated.

The remaining pamphlets under review deal with problems of general interest, in which every worker, every intellectual and middle-class reader is concerned. The least satisfactory is the pamphlet "War in Africa." It is attractively bound, well-printed, informative; it contains valuable material which the bourgeois press has slid over or deliberately ignored; but the presentation of what could be dramatic material is heavy-handed and the writing is burdened with outworn phraseology. Nevertheless, the urgency of the situation and the fact that only in this pamphlet can much salient and undisclosed information be found, make it worthwhile reading.

In direct contrast is the splendid "Religion and Communism" by Earl Browder, the record of a discussion between students of the Union Theological Seminary and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of America. Presented in the form of questions and answers, the Communist position is outlined with masterly clarity and force. The scientific, integrated attitude of Communism to religion, ever the bulwark of the prevailing economic and social system, is here fully explained, in a way to silence slander and set at rest the hysteria of terrified believers.

William F. Dunne's discussion of the Supreme Court's decision on the N.I.R.A. is lucid and well-printed. And Joseph Stalin's speech to the Red Army Academy is an answer to those who feel that the Soviet Union is on the brink of collapse because Mr. Hearst's "reporters" have raked up fifteen-year-old photographs of starving peasants. It

is a decisive piece of Soviet self-criticism. Stalin points out:

Formerly, we used to say that "technique decides everything." This slogan helped us in this respect, that we put an end to the famine in technical resources and created an extensive technical base in every branch of activity. . . . That is very good. But it is very, very far from enough. . . . Without people who have mastered the technique, technique is dead. . . . That is why the old slogan . . . must be replaced by a new slogan, the slogan, "Cadres decide everything."

In this country, we have mastered technique. In this country, we have plenty of men, plenty of "cadres" who can utilize and control our technical equipment, improve it, expand it. The series of pamphlets, "In a Soviet America," prove that despite this

technical skill and equipment, men in industry, in the professions, in the white-collar occupations cannot benefit by these advantages. Dunne's statement at the end of his pamphlet summarizes the necessity of all who believe in civilization and progress to change this system to one in which the majority can enjoy the benefits of what is already there to enjoy:

We workers made this country what it is. We workers conquered the forests and we built the factories. We operate them. We built the railway systems. We run them. And when we say workers, we mean Negro and white, native and foreign-born and everybody who depends for his living on laboring for a wage or salary. This country belongs to us. . . . The time has come to take it back. It will not be so very hard to do this.

BRUCE MINTON.

Wood-Pulpiteer

LOST ON VENUS, by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., Tarzana, Calif. \$2.00.

ONE worker I know reads every Tarzan book he can lay hands on. "Gee that guy's got some imagination!" he bubbles.

I tried to get him to read Cantwell or Dos Passos. "Aw, when a guy's worked hard all day what does he want with something like that? He just wants a good story."

If Edgar Rice Burroughs were merely the writer of "good stories," there would not necessarily be objections to anyone's reading his hackneyed stuff. Unfortunately the creator of Tarzan, in common with certain wood-pulp writers whose example Alan Calmer has pointed out from time to time in *The Daily Worker*, doesn't keep his nose clean. Having amassed a tidy fortune purveying vicarious adventure to the masses from his comfortable villa at Tarzana, California, Burroughs views with an alarm almost as great as that of neighbor Willie the rising revolutionary movement.

This fear vibrates in his latest volume, *Lost on Venus*, in which we follow the amazing career of Carson Napier, late resident of California, now wandering under the cloudy sky of Amtor, or, as we earth-dwellers term it, Venus. Carson is seeking to return Duare, whom he loves dearly but to whom he may not speak of love (for is she not the daughter of a jong?) to her home in Vepaja.

Unluckily they are captured by the Communists (pardon, I mean the Thorians) of Noobol, a slovenly, loutish folk who live under the tyranny of a stupid oligarchy.

As a matter of fact it was the Thorians from whom Carson Napier had just rescued Duare, at the close of an earlier work, *Pirates of Venus*. He continues his holy war against "the rulers of the so-called Free Land of Thora" (read U.S.S.R.) with "their world-wide attempt to foment discord and overthrow all established forms of government

and replace them with their own oligarchy of ignorance."

But let us return to our hero whom we just left in such desperate straits. Carson is led before "a large, gross-appearing man—asleep in a chair with his feet on a table that evidently served him both as desk and dining table, for its top was littered with papers and the remains of a meal."

We cannot do better than to allow the author to depict the pleasant scene which follows:

Disturbed by our entrance, the sleeper opened his eyes and blinked dully at us for a moment. "Greetings, Friend Sov!" exclaimed the officer who accompanied me.

"Oh, is it you, Friend Hokal?" mumbled Sov sleepily. "And who are these others?"

Upon discovering that Carson is not a doctor, of whom they are greatly in need for they are rapidly dying of disease and old age, Sov sentences him to death. He is thrown into the room of seven doors, a torture chamber primarily designed as a "means for converting unbelievers to Thorism."

Miraculously, Carson escapes in time to rescue Duare from the sadistic clutches of high commissar (I mean ongyan) Moosko, (Moscow?) who is having a fine time tickling her with a dagger;—"when he pricked her and she screamed, he laughed—a hideous, gloating laugh. I guessed at once the psychopathic type he represented, deriving pleasure from the infliction of pain upon the victim of his maniacal passion."

After trials and torments Carson escapes to Havatoo, where super-men rule over a fascist paradise.

Here in this city of super-men he finds order and beauty. In contrast with the "box-like, unprepossessing structures with no hint of artistic or imaginative genius" which he noted in Noobol, Carson sees "magnificent buildings set in a gorgeous park." Among the people "there was no hurry, no bustle, no confusion; nor was there idling or loiter-

ing. All suggested well-considered, unhurried efficiency."

Not always had Havatoo been the happy land that it is now. Once, in the words of Carson's friend, Korgan Ero Shan:

Half our people lived in direst poverty, in vice, in filth; and they bred like flies. The better classes, refusing to bring children into such a world, dwindled rapidly. Ignorance and mediocrity ruled.

Then a great jong came to the throne. He abrogated all existing laws and government and vested both in himself. Two titles have been conferred upon him—one while he lived, the other after his death. The first was Mankar the bloody; the second, Mankar the Savior.

This Venusan Mussolini immediately butchered the social democrats. Then "he encouraged the raising of children by people whom . . . scientists passed as fit." But of course in improving the strain of Havatoo, Mankar never thought to breed out the warlike tendencies of his people. Instead, every year a bloody tournament is held to prevent the decay of public morale. Admittedly, "sometimes that policy is a cruel one, but results have demonstrated that it is better for the race than a policy of weak sentimentalism."

By now most everyone should have received the impression that Burroughs would be a splendid contact man to the masses for Lawrence Dennis. His books are read by millions. Capturing that audience, rather than receiving laudatory reviews in *The New Republic*, is the problem confronting proletarian novelists.

WILSON WAYLETT.

Brief Review

THE UNITED STATES AND NEUTRALITY, by Quincy Wright. (Public Policy Pamphlets. Chicago University Press. 25c.)

In treating the history of the American policy of neutrality, Mr. Wright shows that it has always followed the needs of trade. He realizes that "neutrality," has not kept and cannot keep us out of war any longer, but he offers in its place such instruments as the Kellogg Pact and the League of Nations, instruments visibly crumbling. The inescapable solution is the one he shields from his eyes, the destruction of war-breeding capitalist imperialism.

THE REIGN OF GEORGE V, by D. C. Somervell. (Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$3.)

Against their will even the lightest-minded bourgeois historians today must comment on the class struggle and so it happens that in this solemn and courtly chronicle the discerning reader may get further evidence of the fact that the principal use monarchy in England serves is to provide a "supra class" symbol of the "unity" British capitalists strain to make the exploited English masses and the exploited colonial peoples believe in, the "unity" of capitalists and workers, of imperialist exploiters and the exploited colonial peoples.